

A
LETTER

TO THE
AUTHOR

Of a late Paper, Entituled,

*A Vindication of the DIVINES of the
Church of ENGLAND, &c.*

IN DEFENCE of the

HISTORY

OF

Passive Obedience.

Printed in the Year, 1689.

'Books Printed for Jos. Hindmarsh in Cornhill.

A Memorial to his Highness the Prince of *Orange*, in Relation to the Affairs of *Scotland*; together with the Address of the Presbyterian Party in that Kingdom, to his Highness, and some observations on that Address by two Persons of Quality.

Prerogative of Primogeniture, shewing that the Right of an Hereditary Crown, depends not upon Grace, Religion, &c. but only upon Birthright and Primogeniture, by *David Jenner*.

A Discourse of Monarchy, more particularly of the Imperial Crowns of *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland*.

Majestas Intemerata, or the Immortality of the King.

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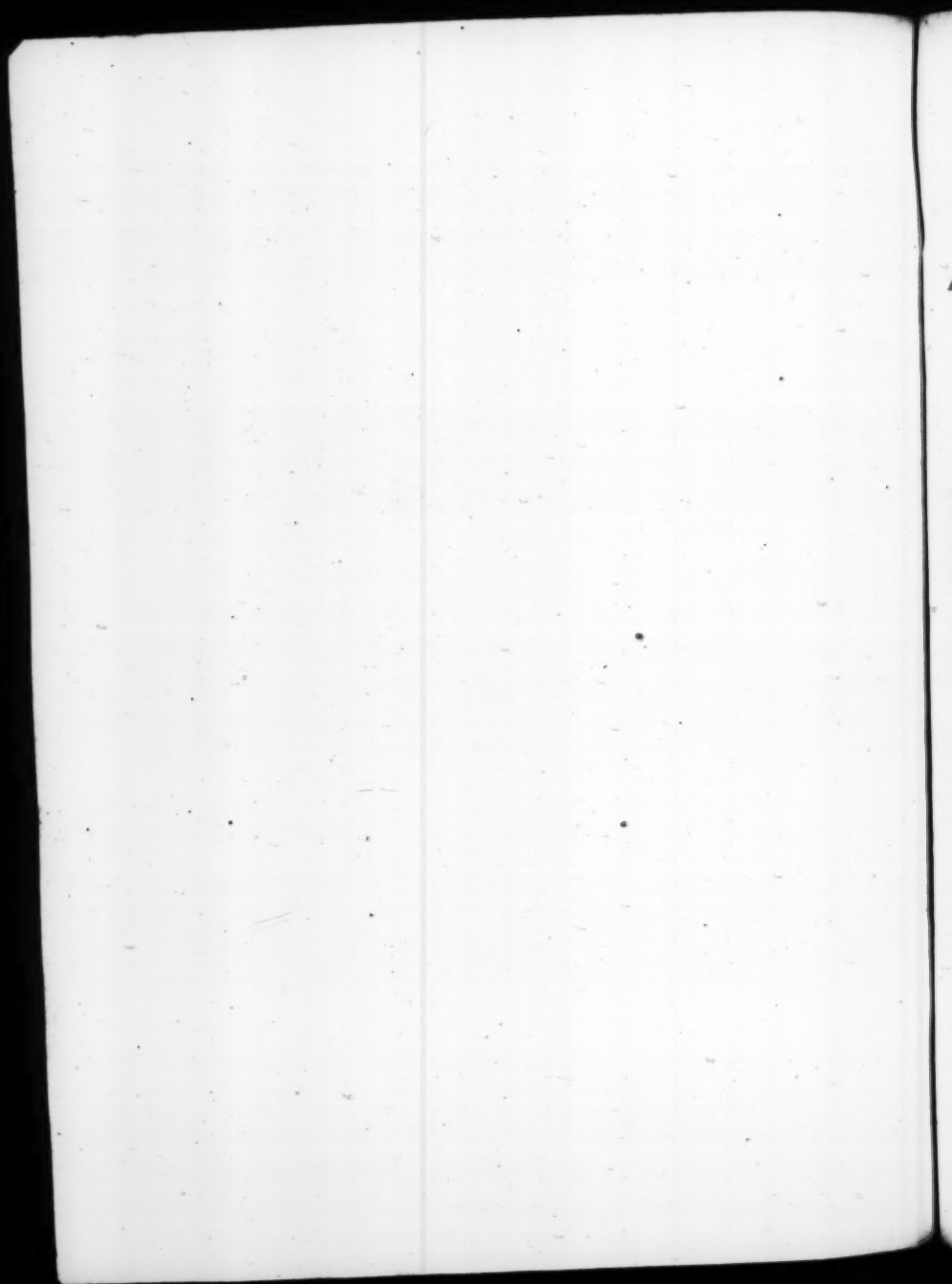
HISTORY

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4.



A
L E T T E R

To the Author of a late Paper, Entituled,
A Vindication of the Divines of the Church of Eng. &c.

In Defence of the History of
PASSIVE OBEDIENCE.

SIR,

IT is the good fortune of some Books to meet with such trivial Answers, as mightily advance the esteem of them, and I assure you Yours to the History of ~~passive~~ **Obedience**, is so very trifling, that were it not for the real, and it may be particular concern you shew in it, one would think, the Author of the History, or some of his friends had written it on purpose to set off his Book.

You pass a severe Censure upon it in your first Paragraph, but in the second you say, you should not have so Censured it, had it come abroad *some considerable time before the first of August, but since it came out so late, you think it was the principal design of it to expose those Divines who have taken the Oath.* But Sir, if it be so easie a Task, as you make it in the third Paragraph to shew, that the New Oath of Allegiance, is *no whit repugnant with the Doctrine of the most absolute Passive Obedience*: Why should you think so learned an Author should have so foolish a design? I cannot believe he could be so silly, as to think his History could make the world believe, that *the generality of our Divines are fallen under the guilt of Apostacy, and Perjury*, if indeed it be so easie to prove, that *even those who*

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Page 15.

have Skrew'd up the doctrine of Non-resistance to the very highest peg, may lawfully take the Oath, and transfer their Allegiance.

But to let that pass, Sir, how doth it appear, that this was the Author's design? It is hard to judge of mens Intentions beyond what they declare themselves; and when the Author saith expressly, he wrote the *History* for other reasons, it was somewhat rash and uncharitable in a Divine to say, that this was his apparent and principal design. He tells you plainly enough in his Preface, he wrote his *History* against four sorts of men. First against those, who ridiculed the doctrine of Passive Obedience: Secondly, against those who affirmed it was a doctrine no older than Archbishop Laud: Thirdly against those, who averr that the Church, and her Divines have taught it for their own Interests: and Fourthly against those, who of late reject that Doctrine upon Popish Principles, that *Power is originally in the People, and that the Foundation of all Government is laid in Compact, &c.* To all which he opposes the authority of the Church, and the concurrent judgment of her Divines from the beginning of the Reformation; hoping to perswade the world that so many pious and learned Men could not so unanimously agree in an Error; or Preach, and Write in so many Reigns meerly to flatter their Princes, and gratifie their own Ambition.

Page 4.

This is the apparent design of that work, and I hope it might become a *Christian, and Protestant, and member of our Church;* and to make you believe that it was as piously, and charitably intended, as you say you would have hoped, had it come out before the first of August: I assure you that it was designed by the Author to come out long before, and that the difficulty of getting of it Printed was the cause, why it came abroad so late. As such a Book cannot be written in a day: so you must needs know it cannot be Printed, when and where the Author pleases; and you did very ill
to

to put that conceit of *Exposing, &c.* in peoples heads, who had it not been for your *Vindication*, would more generally have concluded from the *History*; not that you were *guilty of Apostacy or Perjury*, but that you had taken the New Oath in some Sense, or upon some Principles which in your own Consciences you did believe consistent with the doctrine of Non-resistance, and your former Oaths. Page 4.

This Inference will more naturally occur to the thoughts of those, who read the *History*, than the other, and if you had well thought of it, you might have spared the pains of your *Vindication*: Or if you had thought fit to give the world an account upon what Principle you had taken the Oath, you ought to have forborn such unjustifiable reflections, as you have made upon that Author in the Plural Number; and not have set forth him, and I know not how many more, as men that were content to *Sacrifice the names of all, but an inconsiderable number of their Brethren to their own reputation, that they may be thought the stanch men, and steddies to their Principles.* Page 4.

I think the writing of the *History* doth no more tend to the Sacrificing your names to their reputation, than the writing of many Books for the taking the Oath doth Sacrifice them to yours. Your Books tempt some men to think they stand off out of Pride and fullenness, and *this*, it may be, makes some think, that you have acted contrary to your Principles; but these opinions of men, which cannot be prevented, ought not to make you fall out, and treat one another, as you do. But as to those Principles, to which you tauntingly say, they would be thought *stanch*, they are Church of England Principles, or they are not? if you could have proved they were not, then you had Written to purpose against the *History*; but if they are, then I know not why this *inconsiderable number* may not have a very good Title to the *honourable character* of stanch and steddies Men, who chuse to *suffer* rather than take an Oath; which after reading all,

all, that you have published to perswade Men to take it, they yet think repugnant to that doctrine, which you would not be thought to have deserted.

But, good Sir, why *inconsiderable number*? may not the men be considerable, tho' the number is not; or are we to judge of the cause by the number, or of the number by the cause? you forget that your *Metropolitan* is one of this inconsiderable number, you forget the men of parts, learning, and probity that are in it also; nay you forget, who was the inconsiderable number in the reigns of *Constantine*, and *Valens* in the Empire, and of *Queen Mary* in *England*. You cannot deny but the greater number were Apostates then, and therefore the greatness of the number cannot secure you, but that they may be so now.

But you say the Author of the History hath blackned those of the Clergy, who have taken the Oaths, and some of them by name with deserting that Principle, which they have formerly published to the World. But Sir, it seems to me he hath blackned none of them, unless they have blackned themselves. He hath only produced a Cloud of Witnesses for *Passive Obedience*, whereof many have, and some have not taken the Oath; and if there is a repugnance between that doctrine, and taking of it, as your *Vindication* makes men suspect, then the *Blackning*, and *Apostacy*, about which you have made so much pother, ought not to be imputed to the History, or its Author, but to the nature of the things.

The great endeavours the Clergy, and their Friends used to prevent the imposing of the Oath, the great joy they expressed, at the alteration of the Bill in the House of Lords, and the visible reluctance with which many good, and learned Men have since taken it, are sufficient proofs that there is at least a great seeming disagreement between the doctrine and the Oath, and yet for all that it doth not follow that they who have taken the Oath have deserted the doctrine, which as I hinted before, is your own rash, invidious consequence;

sequence ; but that they have either deserted it, or found a way of taking the Oath, which they judge consistent with it, and that this latter is the case of most that have taken it, I will now shew.

First, Then some learned men, who stood out very long, at last took it, because they were perswaded, that the Government allow'd them to take it in such a limited and qualified sense, as was not inconsistent with the doctrine, or their former Oaths, and these men are no deserters.

Some of these again for the greater ease of their Consciences, and preventing scandal, as they think, have taken the Oath with *declarations*, which abundantly secures them from all suspicion of leaving their former Principles.

But others, who have taken the Oath in the highest, and most unlimited sense, as I perceive you have done, have generally taken it upon such Principles, as leave the doctrine of *Passive Obedience*, and all its concomitant doctrines secure. Those Principles are chiefly three, *Possession, Abdication and Conquest*, tho' the two last seem plainly inconsistent to some Mens understandings : for if the King, as you assert, was conquered, then he had good reason to fly, and by consequence did not abdicate his Kingdom. Some, I confess, make a mixt Hypothesis of two, or all these together, but whatever these mens Hypotheses be, *simple or mixt*, if they be true, they will reconcile the taking of the new Oath with the old doctrines, and so they are secure from the scandal of Apostacy, which your *Vindication* more than the History hath fixed upon them.

There are others again, who justify the taking of the Oath upon such Principles, as seem indeed to overthrow the Doctrine of Non-resistance, and the Author of the History I confess is very angry at them, for embracing the doctrine of *Hobbs, Milton, and Parsons*, and if he blackens any in his Book with the imputation of *Apostacy*, it is only these few men. They assert that power is originally in the people,
that

that the foundation of all Government is in compact, that the Crown of *England* is as conditional, as that of *Poland*; that a King falls from the Government when he endeavours to subvert the Constitution of it, and these are the sanguine Casuists, which boldly cut the Knot, which others of you find so difficult to unloose. It seems they find enough in the *Monastick Historians* to satisfy their Consciences, and to absolve them from the Laws of the Kingdom, and the doctrine of the Church, for they make King *John's* reign the standard of our Government, and that which hath always been accounted the Popery of the Kingdom the very constitution of it, and tho' these mens Principles, if they be true, will bravely acquit them of Perjury, yet, I confess, I cannot acquit them from revolting from that doctrine, which some of them with a witness have preached, and published to the World.

Conquest of the Kings without a Conquest of the Kingdom is the bottom, upon which you have undertaken to reconcile that doctrine with taking the Oath. This is a nice subject for me to discuss, but however I hope I may ask you two or three Questions upon it, without danger or offence.

I. Whether in all the Casuistical Writers about Conquest you have ever read, that such a Revolution, as ours was brought, as an instance of Conquest? It is nothing like the usual Examples of *Alexander's* Conquest over the *Persians*, the Conquest of the *Israelites* over the *Canaanites*, and that of the *Romans* over their Provinces.

II. Whether they allow a King to be conquered, when his Kingdom is not conquered? and if they do, whether they allow a King so conquered can loose his rights to the Crown and the allegiance of his People: King *John* of *France* did not loose his right to the Crown, and his Peoples allegiance, when he was so conquered by the *black Prince*, and brought captive into *England*; nor *Francis*, when he was conquered by *Charles the Fifth*

III. Whether

III. Whether they allow subjects voluntarily to give away their allegiance, when they are not conquered? for what subjects give up to a foreign Prince without Conquest is freely Given.

IV. Whether they determine a King to be conquered, as long as he is in a condition to prosecute his Right by War? for Conscience will be apt to think that he is not yet conquered enough, who is in a Condition to resist.

V. Whether allegiance can be due to a foreign Prince by virtue of Conquest, who never pretended to be a Conqueror, but disclaims the Rights of Conquest?

VI. How far they extend the right of Conquest, and allow the Conqueror to make use of it?

These, and some other Questions, which I could ask you, must be clearly discussed, and stated, before you can pin the taking of the new Oath upon the *Highest Peg of Non-resistance*, according to your Hypothesis of Conquest.

From the several accounts, which I have here set down, of Mens taking the new Oath, and particularly from the insufficiency of your own, you may see it is not so easie a task, as you would make it, to reconcile the taking of it with the old doctrine of the rights of sovereign Princes, and the duties of Non-resistance. If it were so very easie, those who take the Oath, could not take it in so many senses, and upon so many different Principles, and since you are not satisfied with one anothers senses, and Principles, you ought to have a great tenderness for those who cannot take it in any of your disagreeing senses, nor upon any principle at all.

You do not seem to have considered this by your TEXT upon your Title Page. Let us therefore a little consider the doctrines in the *History*, concerning the rights of sovereign Princes, and the duties of Non-resistance. As to the first, we read enough to this purpose, that the rights of a Sovereign are, that he is accountable to none but God, that he cannot be judged, deposed, or deprived by his Subjects, nor

Luke 17. 1.
It is impossible but
that offences will
come, but
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him thro'
whom they
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forfeit his Government to them, that they have no power over him, nor any right to take the Sword without Commission from him, and therefore when he is once King, he must continue to be so, till he dies, or freely and voluntarily resigns. From hence it follows, that the Subjects of such a Sovereign Prince cannot dispose of his Crown, nor renounce his Right to reign over them, nor transferr their natural and sworn Allegiance from him without his consent.

All these Duties are so plainly involved in the Doctrine of Non-resistance, that I assure you there is no need of *Atheistical and debauched Persons* to make the people discern them, and if any of them chance to be scandalized at the taking of the New Oath upon reading the *History*, neither the Author nor the Doctrine of it are answerable for that, but only the *Takers*; to whom some will be provoked to think that Text more justly applicable, till you can prove, that the taking of the Oath is *no whit* repugnant to the doctrine of Non-resistance, which for all your confidence you have not yet done, tho', I would to God you had done it with success.

I hear there is an *Apology* a writing by way of Answer to the *History* for taking of the Oath, and I protest to you, I heartily wish it all the success that any *Apology* ever had. It is evident *the History* it self hath made it needful; for the Author of the view of Dr. M's Sermon saith plainly, that *your later Discourses and Practices notoriously contradict* your former Doctrines, and it hath also put common Readers upon enquiry, how the Authors of such Doctrines can consistently with their old principles take the new Oath?

I tell you this, because you are so warm against your unfortunate Brethren, who *think themselves not yet acquitted from their former Oaths*. You do not stick to say they make *Idols of their Kings*: but I beseech you to tell me, did they make an Idol of K. J. in all his Majesty and Glory? Did they

they not withstand his Arbitrary power by such means as the Law allows? Were they not *Cloſeted, Suspended, and Imprisoned*, as well as others, and did they not boldly preach and write against his *Idol Popery*: and in ſhort, did they Idolize him more than your ſelf? But once more, *why make Idols* of their Kings? The Doctrines to which *they* certainly adhere, oblige them to all Sovereigns, as well as Kings. It is not Kings, as ſingle perſons, but as Supream, that they give that Veneration to, which you miſcall *Idolizing*; and in other Governments they would Idolize *Senates and Conventions*, with the ſame immutable Faith and Allegiance, that they here *Idolize* Kings. I know none of them that *Idolize* the King more than the Law of the Kingdom doth. But however, Sir, I thank you for the Phraſe, I never read it before, but in *Hugh Peters's* Tryal, who made the people his Idol, and ſaid the *office of a King was dangerous, and uſeleſs*, which I am afraid many men ſtill ſay in their hearts.

Nay, you ſay, *the world is chiefly beholden to them for arbitrary and tyrannical Kings*, and if I had a mind to return upon you, I could as well ſay, that the world hath been beholden to others, for ſo many Covenants, Affociations and Rebellions. But, Sir, why muſt *they* be blamed for the *Tyranny of Kings*? Blame the Doctrine, if you pleaſe, and the Church which hath taught it, but let the men go free. If Kings ſin becauſe the grace of God abounds towards them, as his Vicegerents; the blame is to be laid, neither indeed on the Doctrine, nor thoſe who teach it, but on their own wicked hearts; and you would do well to conſider, whether we have not had, as many gracious Kings, under the preaching of it ſince the Reformation, as in any other Kingdom, where it is neither taught nor believed. The *Fr. King* was not made a Tyrant by it, for that is no Popiſh doctrine: and in like manner, it was King *James's* zeal for Popery, and not this doctrine

which was the cause of his mis-doings.

You also tell them with great civility, *that they are inconsiderative to amazement of the Prior Obligation they are under to their Religion, and the Community of which they are Members.* But Sir, in saying so, you seem inconsiderate to amazement your self. Methinks the History, if you never talked with any of them, might have convinced you, that they are not unmindful of the Obligation they are under to their Religion, since it is the sense of that, and I believe that alone, which keeps them from Swearing. They believe there are some means and methods by which Religion will not be preserved, and they think it a very dishonourable, and preposterous way to preserve it by Practices contrary to its Precepts: and if in this they are *inconsiderative to amazement*; the Primitive Christians in the decennial Persecution were so too.

As to the *Community of which they are Members*, they wish it, as well as you do, and understand the true interest of it, and are willing to promote it by all just and Legal ways; but then they believe that the *Community* neither diffusive, nor representative hath any right by Law, or Gospel to distress the King by Arms, or transfer his Crown, and their own Allegiance without his consent. They are also persuaded that it tends more to the safety of the Community to bear a Tyrannical King, than to resist his Tyranny, and unhinge the Government by force; and whether their Opinion, or the contrary is truest, they think Time, and Experience have sufficiently shewn. You are forced to acknowledge, that *Salus Populi hath been abused to most wicked purposes*, and I believe, you will also acknowledge that it hath been more abused in This Kingdom by the Subjects, than Non-resistance by the Kings: and if you had understood it in Bishop Sander's sense (who sure was not *inconsiderate to amazement*) that *Salus Populi, the welfare of*
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the people principally includes the preservation of the Head, and his Rights: You would have been ashamed to assert, that that Maxim deverts K. J. of his Crown, and dissolves our Obligation to him.

By these and some other passages you make me suspect, that you do not believe the Doctrine of *Passive Obedience*, as the Church of *England* hath taught it, but that your *Passive Obedience* is such an one as is consistent with resisting of Sovereign Authority. What you also mean by *the highest peg of it*, I cannot guess; for Non-resistance is Non resistance all over, and presupposes Injustice, Oppression, and Persecution in all degrees; and I desire you to consider, whether under a limited Monarchy, there can be any occasion for it, till Kings break their Oaths, and violate their Laws and exercise Arbitrary power. They must first invade the rights of the People, before they can be called to the exercise of this Self-denying Doctrine. We can never suffer till our Kings begin to rule in a way subversive of the Government; nor ever suffer to any trying degree of Persecution, till they set up illegal Courts or govern by the Sword.

But perhaps you will say, that single persons, or families ought to suffer but not the *Community*. To which I answer, that the *Community* is made up of single persons, and families, and when one person, or family, or Corporation suffers Illegally in a common Cause, the whole Community suffers with it, and therefore to what purpose hath this Doctrine been so carefully taught by our Church and her Divines, and You among the rest, unless we are to submit to our Kings when they turn Tyrants, and subvert the Laws.

Our Church and her Clergy, hath all along taught the doctrine of Suffering, with a particular eye to this very case, if God to punish us for our sins should suffer our Kings

to

to turn Tyrants, therefore we must either absolutely disclaim it, which you are unwilling to do, or else suffer patiently against Law, when there is no other remedy but Arms, which neither our Religion, nor the Law, which makes it our Property, allow.

In the 9, & 10. pag. you upbraid the Compilers of the History, as you call a single Author, with not assisting K. James, and scoffingly ask them, *Why they did not at least mind the People of their duty, and excite them to it.* Pray Sir, did you do so, or no? If you did not, the same reason that will justify, or excuse you, will also justify or excuse them. Your Conscience tells you, that neither you nor they then thought, that the King could have lost his Kingdoms, and I must further tell you, because you seem to pinch them with your question, that several of them did at their great hazard remind their People of the duty of *Non resistance*, and particularly, the Author of this Book; For tho' you are pleased to tell them, that hazard ought not to discourage *Ministers from a Necessary duty*, yet I must tell you, that perhaps an *Apostle* is not bound to run the danger of such hazard, and to so little purpose. You cannot have forgot the rage and madness of the Rabble all over the Kingdom at that time, and when the Papists shall equally upbraid both sides, as you upbraid one with *silently looking on*, then I believe, you will think your common confidence, that the King would not suffer by your silence, and the terror of the *Mob.* good topicks of excuse.

I find you p. 13. reviving the old distinction betwixt the Kings *political capacity*, and his *personal interest*, or person, and thereby implying, as the *Spencers* did in *Edward* the Second's time, that it is lawful for the People to separate his Person from his Power, and govern in default of him, when he doth not govern according to Law. But then I must tell you, that this Doctrine was solemnly condemned by

two Parliaments, one in *Edward* the Second, and the other in *Edward* the Third's time. It was also revived 50. Years ago, and as solemnly condemned, tho' not expressly, yet in effect by two or three Acts of Parliament since the Restoration, and I pray you to tell me, as a Divine, is it not the King's person his *natural person*, that is anointed, and which we are bound to honour, and over which the Law tells us we have no coercive power, and whose death it makes High Treason to compass, or imagine, as also to take up Arms against him, and which, in short, was deposed in *Richard* the Second, and murdered in *Charles* the First. Give me leave also to tell you, that you run from your Argument of Conquest, in the attempt you have made to absolve us from our old Oath of Allegiance, with this distinction, and the *welfare of the People*, which is called the *highest Law*. If Conquest will do, what need of this Theory, and if this will do, what need of that? but you do wisely in having two Strings for your Bow.

You amaze me with your *amazing providences*, pag. 14. Major-General *Harrison* argued at his Tryal just so, and truly that way of arguing, tho' now again in fashion, becomes a *Turk* better than a Christian, and a *Fifth-Monarchy* man much better than a Church of *England* Divine. Had a Novice in Divinity argued so, it might have been excusable, but there is no excuse for such as you, who it may be saw the amazing providences 50. Years ago, and who must needs know, that God permits many amazing things, which he doth not approve: For as he lets his Sun shine on the Good and on the Evil: So he gives amazing successes to bad Princes and Causes (witness the * *French* victories) as well as to the Good.

* According to that of the *French* Poet.

Una dies B----os. Burgundos hebdomas una.

Una Lotharingos Luna. Quid annus erit?

I should remark some other Passages in your Book, but that to use your own phrase, there may be hazard in touching of them. In answer to one of them, I could refer you to an excellent saying, in Dr. B.'s answer to *Parl. Pac.* and whereas you suppose in your last Paragraph, that all, who have taken the New Oath, have transferred their Allegiance, as you have done, I must tell you, if you know it not before, that they do not think so. And I beseech you to consider, that the reason why so many good Men stand out, is not that they are fond of K. *James*, or expect more than you from him, but because they cannot transfer their Allegiance with a quiet Conscience, but when God shall take away that which *lets*, then they will readily transfer it, and become as good Liege-Subjects, as you can desire them to be.

In the mean time, Sir, I hope you, and all good Men will pity the *inconsiderable number*, whose Consciences direct them against their interests, and *inclinations*. Two of them, Learned, and Holy Bishops, have declared on their Death-Beds, that if Death had been the Penalty of not taking the Oath, they must have offered their Lives to redeem their Consciences. They were good Men, and good reasoners too, and I hope their declarations, if they were made publick, would satisfy honest Men of all Perswasions, that it is neither pride, nor peevishness, nor any other evil passion, nor yet any worldly hopes, or expectations, but a full perswasion, or just fear of Perjury that keeps others also from taking the Oath.

I also hope it will be considered of what Church they are Ministers, what an Ornament many of them in their respective Relations have been unto it, how constant they were to their Profession in the late time of tryal, and how stoutly they stood with their Brethren in the breach. These things, and *the hardness of their Case*, seem to call for pity from

from all good Church-men, both among the Clergy, and the Laity, tho' a late uncharitable *lay* * *Gentleman*, who pretends to be a good Church-man, saith, he hopes *they will not meet with much compassion*, that is in his *figure*, with none at all. He hopes it, because they are *blind*, and *wilful men*, but if he indeed be the Church-man he pretends to be, I hope he will repent before his next *offering*, both of the *rashness* of his judgment, and the *uncharitableness* of his wish. By what principle of the Church of *England* will he justify himself for sitting in judgment upon his Teachers, and passing sentence of *wilful blindness* upon them, to make them odious to the People? Is this consistent with the reverence which the Church teaches to be due to the Fathers and Pastors of it? Is it consistent with Christian Charity to treat them as the *Pagans* treated their Predecessors, the Apostles, and Presbyters, when they dressed them up in the Skins of Beasts, and exposed them as the filth, and off scourings of the World? What have they done contrary to the Churches Doctrine, or the Example of their Predecessors, or their own Principles to deserve this usage? How comes he, who not long since thought many of them so venerable for their Candor, Learning, and *Judgment*, now to proclaim them *blind*, and *wilful*, and to wish so much evil to them, to whom he formerly wished, and had reason to wish some of them so much good? If they are in an error, it would have much better become his character, and pretensions, to have excused it, and apologized for them, and instead of making their Friends their Enemies, to have made their Enemies their Friends. Their punishment is like to be grievous enough without any accession, he needed not have added affliction to the miserable, but they trust in God, who is able to do them more good, than he can do them hurt, and since he hath so frankly told the World, he hath no bowels for them, he may be sure none of these

* Mr. B. *B. in*
a late piece
intituled, the
Doctrine of
Non-resist-
ance, &c.
p. 24.

blind men will ask Bread at his Door. But as *blind* as he thinks them, they can *look* unto Jesus the Author, and finisher of their faith, and according to his Precepts, and Example, pray for those, that despitefully use them, and for him in particular, that God may have more *compassion* for him, than it seems he hath, or is willing others should have for them. All the ground of his displeasure against them is, that they are afraid of *Perjury*, a Sin, which he himself sets forth, as most detestable and dreadful, in the IX. Section of his *Justice of Peace*, whither I refer him, and the Readers, especially those with whom he is so angry for not taking the Oath.

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